B. 13. 227

Epsom August 12th 1802

Dear Sir

About three weeks past I had the pleasure of dining with Capt. Stoddard at Fort Constitution or New-Castle Island, he was so polite as to send his boat to Portsmouth for me knowing of my being there, everything there belonging to the United States appeared in excellent Order, the Fort & its appendages were very neat & clean, but I must confess that it is not that plan of defence that I expected it was, it appears to me that Ships of War might run by without being much annoy'd were you to visit there I think you would be of my Opinion, but perhaps at present it is as well as otherwise as there is no possible reason of danger —

In conversing with Capt. Stoddard I found that he was very agreeably disappointed in being continued in his present Command, as the business of arrangement was principally in the power of the Secretary at War. and some years ago he had opposed the present Secretary when held up as a Representative for

for Congress and had written a number of pieces unfavourable of him — but at present I think (if I can form a just Opinion of the Man) he is a Republican mind in favor of the present administration and will use every measure to support it — I think (undoubtedly) that he feels Sorrow (for I am sure I heard him express it) for the Active part he formerly took in Opposing the present Secretary at War however I may be mistaken in my Ideas though I think I am not, — Should you visit this State undoubtedly you will take a view of the Fort should that be the case and I could possibly have knowledge of it I should be happy to attend you there ——

One thing it appears to me is very much wanting for the purpose of Accomodating the Fort that is a Small Wharf which would cost but a small sum, as the labour might be done by the Soldiers, all the expence the United States would be at would be the materials, at present it is very ill-convenient landing there with a boat, as you are obliged to go on & off on plank or board which is quite unsafe —— I have a long time anticipated the pleasure of seeing

you

you this Summer or Fall in this State hope I shall not be disappointed — I have a Sisters Son in the Army by the name of Page in Capt. Stoddards Company, the time for which he engaged will (I think) expire in one year from November next — he is very desirous of being discharged, and wishd me to mention the matter to you, I have conversed with Capt. Stoddard on the Subject who appears not to be willing that he should retire from Service — he is a young fellow of a good education and quite capable — but has heretofore been rather dissipated, Should he be discharged I think it probable he will in future conduct with more propriety. as undoubtedly he can soon be in good business hope you will consider the matter & do what you think is equitable. —

My Wife has been absent about a week — and I feel as if I should not live much longer without her or Some other of her Sex — though next December brings me up to Fifty — my best compliments to Mrs Dearborn and Family. hope this will find you & all your connexions happy ——

I am with the greatest friendship & esteem your Friend & Humble Servt

Mark. McClary

Genl. Dearborn —

Gen[l] M[c] Gary
12[th] August 1802

RW 52 NC Ch. B. 13, 2277